

Learning to Hunt

Hosting a hunting-
based outdoor skills
event in your
community



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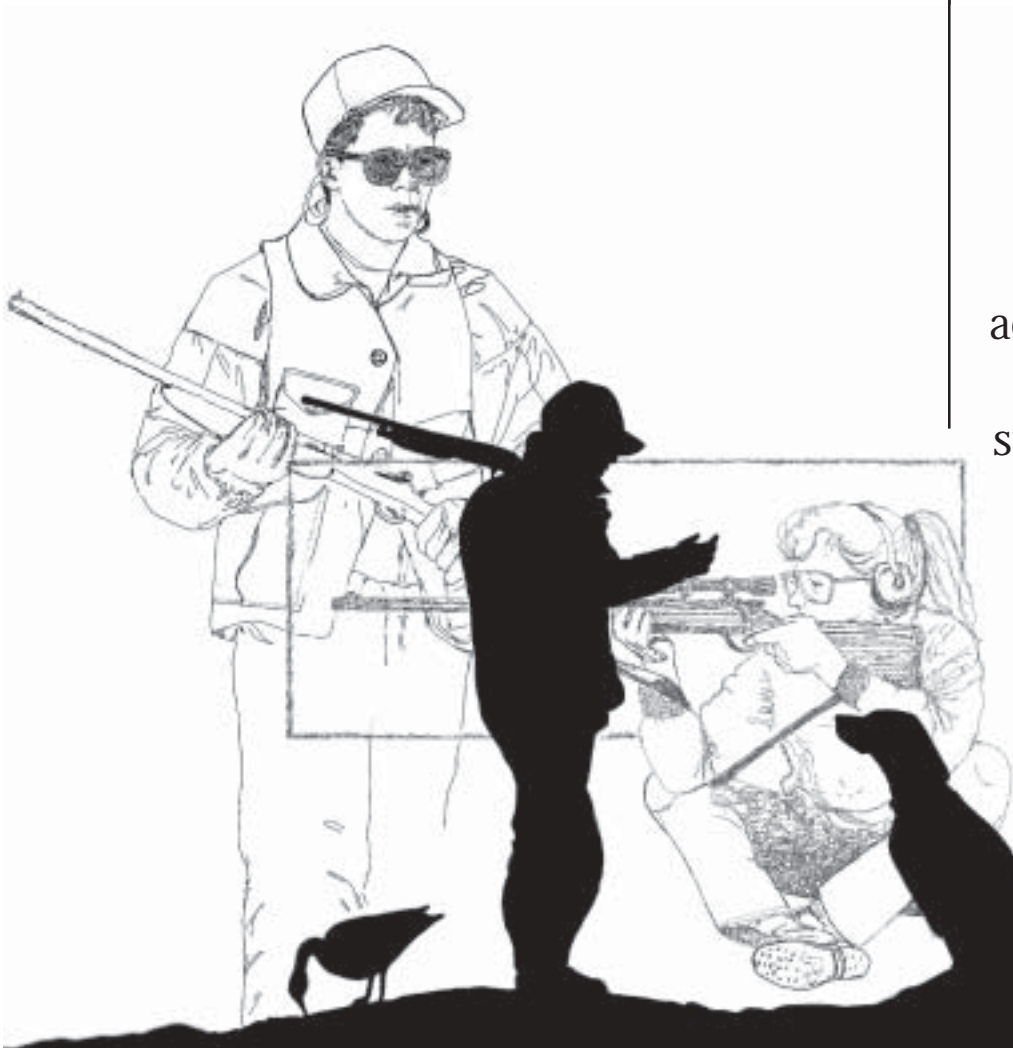
Station
11

Ready, Aim, Fire!

Ready, Aim, Fire!

A simulated hunt

Using a .22 caliber rifle or a Polaroid camera, participants practice their hunting skills including reflex action, observational abilities, game spotting and accurate shooting at different stations with life-sized, realistic targets.



Station 11

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Objectives

Participants shall:

demonstrate the ability to locate and accurately shoot targets.

demonstrate the ability to look beyond the target to determine if it is a safe shot.

differentiate between legal and illegal shots.

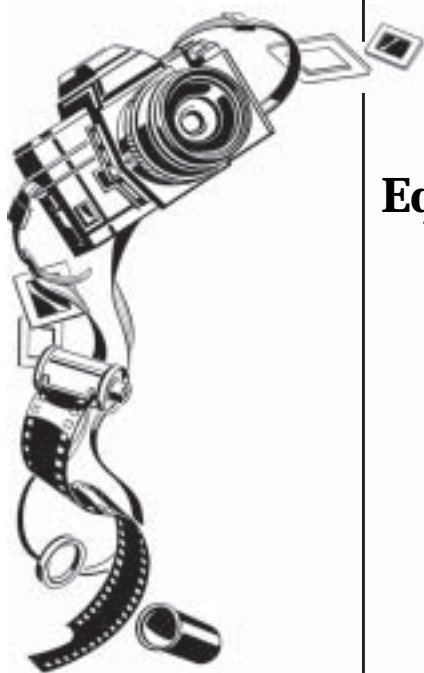
Equipment

Assorted life-size targets of game and non-game animals
Cardboard and colored marking pens or crayons
Glue
Stuffed mannequin with hunting shirt and hat
.22 rifle and ammunition *or* a Polaroid camera and film
Stopwatch
Clipboard, paper and pen or pencil

Station Setup

Realistic life-size targets are important in this activity. Purchase or make life-size targets of a variety of game animals. They can be drawn and colored by the participants, or purchased before hand. An advantage to using hand-drawn targets that participants color is that it gets participants acquainted with what the animal looks like. They will learn coloration and color patterns. With patience and care, these targets can be very life-like. Another option is to buy life-size targets that are already colored. Paper targets should be glued to cardboard to make them more rigid. This is important when they are set up in the field.

Once the targets are prepared, select a safe area for setting up the targets. A good place is along the bottom of a hill. Hills provide a natural safe backdrop and yet allow realism for the hunting simulation. If a hill is not available, then consult your local warden for help with setting up this teaching station. Remember that a .22 bullet can travel over a mile. **Firearm safety must be in the forefront of everyone's mind while setting up and conducting this activity.**



Once you have established your safe zones of fire for this activity, then place five to ten targets at intervals over 100 to 200 yards. Place the stuffed mannequin dressed in hunting clothes behind a game target, in the line of fire. Make note of where the targets are. Don't hide them, but don't place them so that they are too obvious.

Include some "Shoot / Don't Shoot" setups along the route. For example, the mannequin dressed in hunting clothes can be placed against a log behind one of the animal targets. When participants spot the animal they should be looking beyond the target, and should pass up the shot as unsafe. This is good practice for teaching novice hunters to look beyond the target before they shoot. You can also include inappropriate species/sexes of animals within each shooting station. For instance you can place a doe, hen pheasant or non-game animal such as a badger or heron among the shooting stations.

Work out a scoring system so that the participants are able to measure their progress. Here is one method: Each hunter starts with a score of 100 points. Deduct 10 points for each unsafe shot. Also deduct the number of seconds it takes for the participant to fire at a target. If the target is not observed at all, a maximum of 20 points is subtracted. Add 10 points for a killing shot. Subtract 10 points for a wounding shot. No points are awarded for a missed shot.



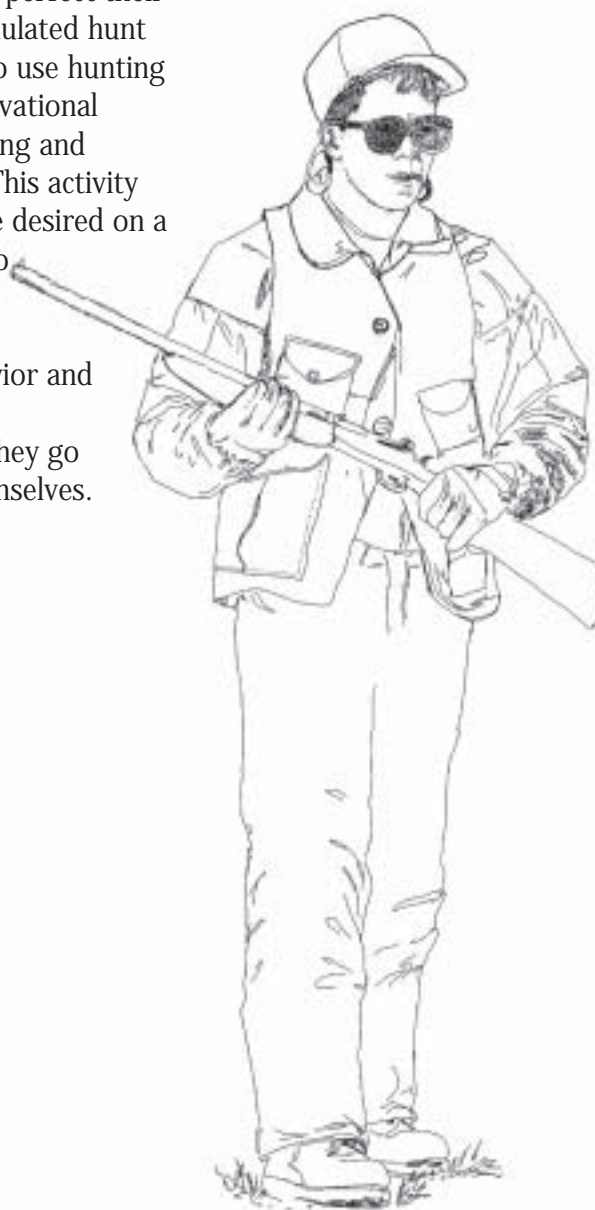
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Background Information

In order for novice hunters to develop hunting skills, it is necessary for them to have as many experiences as possible. If we rely on only the experiences of an actual hunt, novice hunters will not have a chance to perfect their hunting skills. A simulated hunt allows participants to use hunting skills including observational abilities, game spotting and accurate shooting. This activity utilizes skills that are desired on a real hunt. It also allows the leaders to observe the safety-consciousness, behavior and hunting methods of participants before they go into the field by themselves.



Procedure

Explain the objective of this activity to your group and describe the general layout of the simulated hunt course. Keep your group small. Each novice hunter should be paired with a hunting mentor.

The simulated hunt is conducted by having one novice hunter walk along your planned route carrying a .22 rifle loaded with one cartridge. **Only one novice hunter is carrying the loaded firearm and walking through the simulated hunting course at a time.**

A hunting mentor follows behind the novice hunter with a stopwatch and clipboard. As the novice hunter walks along, he or she looks carefully for the game targets. The mentor knows at which point the target should first be spotted. When that point is reached, the mentor starts the stopwatch. When a novice hunter spots a target and takes a shot, the mentor stops the stopwatch and records the time on the clipboard.

After a target is shot, the novice hunter and the mentor approach the target and determine whether a real-world shot would have been

a killing shot, a wounding shot, or a total miss. Once this is determined and recorded by the mentor, the hunt continues along the hill bottom. The mentor provides another .22 cartridge to the hunting mentor and then they proceed to the next station. If the physical location of the event restricts use of firearms for a simulated hunt, this same activity can be done using a Polaroid camera. The general idea behind the camera hunt is to allow participants to use their skills of stalking and observation to approach the game animals as close as possible and then to select the shot that they desire.



Activity

References

4-H Shooting Sports Hunting Curriculum, edited by Ronald A. Howard, Jr. and James E. Knight (curriculum guide).

